



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN
COMMISSIONER

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

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CONTACT: EMILY GEST
(212) 825-5931

DOI ARRESTS INDIVIDUAL FOR DEFRAUDING WTC DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced today the arrest of TANISHA TRAPP for unlawfully obtaining \$6,236 in disaster relief rent subsidies intended for those affected by the World Trade Center disaster.

TRAPP, 32, of Atlanta, Georgia, has been charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree. If convicted, TRAPP faces up to seven years in prison.

TRAPP, an employee of American Express Travel Related Services Company (“Amex”), was slated to be laid off on September 15, 2001 due to a reduction in the company’s workforce. Those lay-offs were delayed due to the terrorist attacks, and Trapp’s employment ended in December 2001. However, on February 21, 2002, in an attempt to obtain disaster relief from the City of New York Department of Housing Preservation and Development (“HPD”), TRAPP submitted an altered letter from Amex dated October 13, 2001, indicating that she was terminated due to the “September 11th Disaster.” This false representation led to her approval for an HPD rent subsidy on her Manhattan apartment in a program HPD had initiated to assist those directly affected by the World Trade Center Disaster. TRAPP received Section 8 rental subsidies totaling \$6,326, or \$323 a month, from April 2002 to September 2003.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “As we saw after the terrorist attacks in 2001 and as we learn about the devastation caused by the hurricane along the Gulf Coast, tragedies can bring out the best or worst in people. But, no matter how dire one’s circumstances can seem, criminal activity is the wrong course of action to take.”

This arrest is part of an ongoing City-wide crackdown by DOI and New York area prosecutors following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. DOI has been very active in identifying individuals who attempted to profit from the crisis. DOI has arrested more than 165 people for stealing \$17 million from the Municipal Credit Union, and another 47 individuals for other types of crimes including fraud and obtaining financial assistance under false pretenses.

This investigation was conducted by DOI’s Inspector General for the New York City Housing Authority Judith F. Abruzzo and members of her staff including Assistant Inspector General James Hylton, and Chief Investigator John Reatz. The Office of the New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau is prosecuting the matter.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn thanked HPD and FEMA for their assistance in the investigation.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.*